

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6227

As of January 16, 2018

Title: An act relating to reducing the causes of workplace injuries suffered by commercial janitors through a study of work environment, workload, training, and the tools and equipment used in the work performed and to identify best practices.

Brief Description: Concerning workplace injuries by janitors.

Sponsors: Senators Keiser, Conway, Saldaña and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 1/15/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to conduct a study by December 31, 2022, on commercial janitorial safety; and to provide annual progress reports to the legislative labor committees beginning December 31, 2018, and until the study is complete.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Staff: Susan Jones (786-7404)

Background: Janitorial Workload, Health, and Safety Work Group. In 2014, L&I formed a work group with representatives from the business and labor sectors, as well as L&I staff, to examine safety and workload standards for janitorial services workers and make recommendations for improvement of these standards. The work group studied:

- workplace safety and health regulations and policies;
- wage laws and employment standards;
- workers' compensation data on injuries and illnesses among janitorial services workers compared to other industries; and
- a 2013 study of janitorial workload, and health and safety conducted by the University of Washington for Service Employees International Union Local 6.

The work group found that janitorial services workers were at greater risk of injury than workers in other service industries. The work group also found that female janitors, janitors

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in the profession for less than a year, and janitors who prefer a language other than English file more compensable claims than individuals outside these demographics. The work group issued a report in December 2014 that contained recommendations, including measures to increase access to safety information, improve training, and implement reporting systems to better identify, investigate, and improve safety issues in high-risk environments.

Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP). L&I employs research investigators under the SHARP program, that is responsible for conducting research to promote safe work environments and prevent workplace injuries. In addition to research projects initiated by L&I, SHARP conducts research in response to requests by employers, workers, business associations, industry groups, and government.

Summary of Bill: L&I must:

- conduct a study by December 31, 2022, within existing resources, on commercial janitorial safety that measures the workers' safety and health risks associated with their work tasks, taking into consideration their work environment, workload, training, and their tools and equipment;
- use methods in the study to allow the data to be extrapolated to other comparable industries, such as hospitality and retail, with the goal of creating safety and injury prevention practices; and
- provide annual reports of its progress and findings to the legislative labor committees beginning December 31, 2018, and until the study is complete.

The act expires December 31, 2023.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2018.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The day before his assassination, Martin Luther King, Jr. was in Memphis to support the sanitation workers. That was a watershed for social justice. Here we are still trying to make progress.

Our state economy has improved and we have one of the highest building occupancy rates in the Puget Sound. Unfortunately, staffing ratios for janitors has not recovered since the recession. Workloads have not decreased. Janitors are in the top ten for work related injuries. Our job is unsafe because we are expected to work too fast and have too much to do. We are expected to clean what amounts to four and a half houses a night. It is too much stress. We need more time to make the work safe. We collect trash and it is dangerous if people throw away needles. We face a lot of pressure to finish the work faster and faster every day. My health has suffered from the workload.

Other: SHARP has studied this, and janitors are a high risk profession, specifically for women.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Karen Keiser, Prime Sponsor; Mauricio Ayon, Political Director, SEIU6, Property Services NW; Kim Lee, Member SEIU6, Property Services NW; Maria de Lourdes Carrilo, Member SEIU6, Property Services NW; Amir Kalabic, Member SEIU6, Property Services NW.

OTHER: Dave Bonauto, Labor & Industries, SHARP Program.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.